

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for encapsulating and decapsulating information into a data packet being transmitted through a plurality of switches. The method has the steps of receiving a data packet in a first switch for transmission to a second switch and encapsulating information into a field of said data packet so that the information, when encapsulated into the data packet, does not increase the size of the data packet. The method also has the steps of transmitting the data packet having the information encapsulated in the data packet to the second switch and receiving the data packet having the information encapsulated in the data packet in the second switch. The final step is the step of decapsulating the information encapsulated in the data packet.